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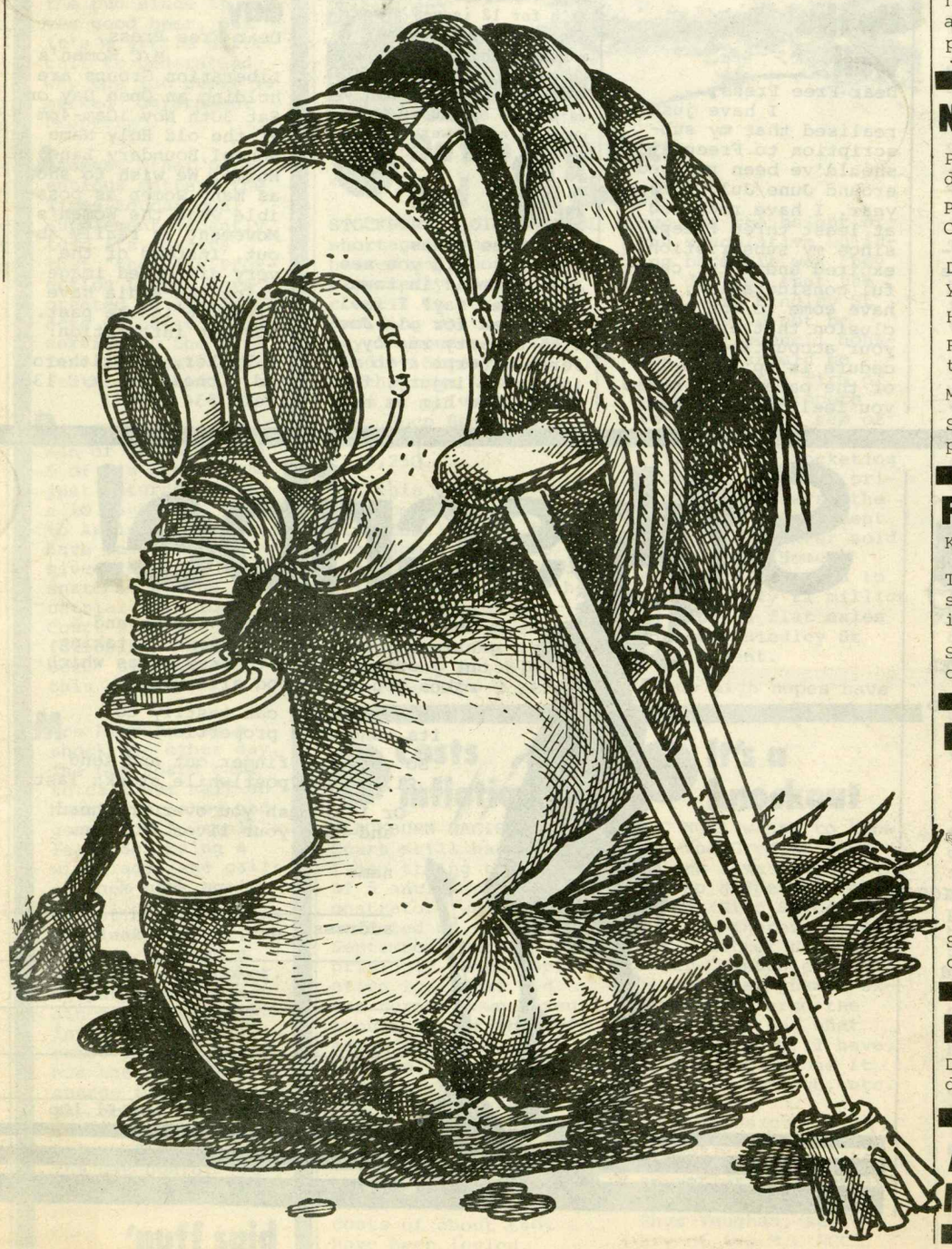
Issue 29



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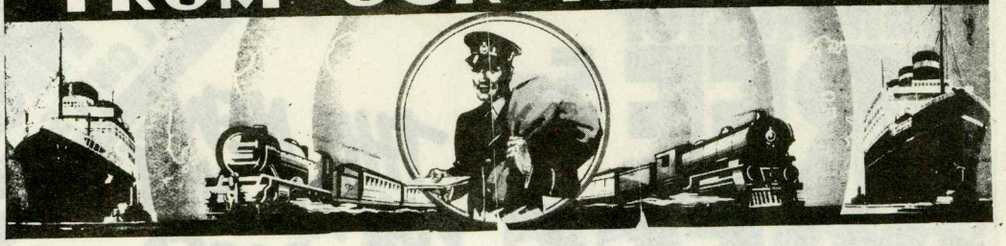
NUSS needs you lot

Dear Free Press,
For the uninitiated, the National Union of School Students was formed in 1972 in an attempt to organise & unite school students throughout the country. To protect our rights & fight for a radical change in education. We still exist, much to the surprise of many a doubting Thomas. We are not a 'Student Power'group. Far from it. We believe in collective responsibility for running schools. Our simple cry is 'humanise school'. We are a reasonably active area, but new members are always welcome.
We hope to open a centre in M/C, at 178 Oxford Rd, which will be manned by NUS & NUSS volunteers. It will contain a specialised literature shop and a legal advice centre for school children in particular. It will also be a centrel meeting place for all those interested in making a radical change in education.
We hope it will be open by January 1975. The Alternative Education Centre will only be a success if it receives a good response from the public - that means you lot. Anyone interested in helping with this project, please contact me.

Yours,
Mark Greenwood,
43 Spath Road,
Didsbury.
Tel. 061 445 1807.

FROM OUR READERS



Up the wall

Dear Free Press,
I have just realised that my subscription to Freep should've been renewed around June/July this year. I have received at least three Freeps since my subscription expired and after careful consideration, I have come to the conclusion that either your accounting procedure is"up the wall" or the paper that makes you feel good all over is selling so well you no longer rely on subscription income.
Or is Tom Keen backing you as well??

Best Wishes,
C.Tarrant,
Ladysmith Street,
Shaw Heath,
Stockport.

Ed: Wrong on all counts! Your sub isn't for one year. It's for 12 issues & we don't exactly come out monthly. Thanks for your support & sub. renewal. Wonder if Tom Keen will be as amused by your last comment as we were!

A bit grim

Dear Free Press,
Did you see Joe Grimmond in town the other day? I feel a bit sad for old Joe with a party run by Jeremy Thorpe & to add insult to injury, few recognised him as his rosy cheeks pottered up King Street. What an ungrateful lot the British electorate is.

By the way, what ever happened to your resident poet?

Yours faithfully,
L.Marson,
Patricroft.

Open day

Dear Free Press,
M/C Women's Liberation Groups are holding an Open Day on Sat 30th Nov 10am-4pm at the old Holy Name School,Boundary Lane, Hulme. We wish to show as many women as possible what the Women's Movement is really about, instead of the very distorted image which the Media have given it in the past. Further information:

M.Walker, 23 Clitheroe Rd, Longsight, M/C 13. Tel. 834 7889.

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It has come to my notice, ladies and gentlemen, that not everyone is taking out a subscription to Free Press which makes you feel good all over.

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Or I'll bash you over the head and have your liver for tea.

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I enclose cheque/PO for £1.10p

The George & Dragon on Bridge Street has some curious connections. It's not hard to understand why the police force likes the pub since it serves good beer, but it's a little difficult to understand why the loo paper is marked "Government Property".

Amongst other portentious matters, the Times Educational Supplement recently told its readers that "the Cats Protection League have created an award for acts of outstanding service to the welfare of cats". Purrfection itself!

Robert Dilley, chairman of Con-Mech, and 5 of his chums have just returned from a 10 day, £5000 jaunt to Antigua. Con-Mech have recently received the £47,000 snatched by the Industrial Relations Court from the AUEW following the engineers' dispute with this company.

Mrs Alcroft had a shock the other day. The Gas Board came to call but half an hour after they had gone, Mrs.A, smelt a leak. So, being a wise lady, she called them back again.

Whilst he was fixing the leak however, the gas man knocked a knob off the cooker. He put it right again but a few days later the gas bill came. The gas board had the nerve to charge for work on the cooker knob as well as the leak repairs. "Well" said the gas board, "It was your leak".

'nuff said

Do the hoco Poco and turn about

STOCKPORT'S DISGRACEFUL shortage of council houses may soon be unexpectedly eased. The council is currently deciding whether to buy 55 houses in the Hindley Street area of the town from a firm of private builders, Poco Homes, at an agreed price of £338,250.

But this windfall for Stockport's waiting list families (& for Poco Homes who have not been able to find private buyers for the houses) is proving something of an embarrassment for the local Tory establishment. Because 2 years ago, at the height of the speculative building boom, it was they who decided that the 4.93 acre Hindley St site should not be used for council housing, but should be sold off to a firm of property developers for the paltry sum of £132,500. In the palmy 1972 days of rocketing house prices, the original purchasers, the Greenside Development Co Ltd (who later sold out to Poco Homes) must have expected to gross nearly £1 million in house & flat sales on their Hindley St development.

These high hopes have been shattered by the mortgage famine, but an examination of the original sale is still instructive. The Hindley St. sale, by the old Tory controlled council, was finalised in May 1972 - just 2 weeks before the local elections in which the Tories lost control of the council. The sale still provides a fine example of how councils can, if necessary, speed up their procedure & keep red tape to a minimum. The future of the site was decided in a creditable display of vitality in a series of meetings held between December '71 & May '72.

The first clue that the Tories wanted to deal with the matter quickly came when the council decided to use the "vesting day" procedure to finalise its compulsory purchase of the 271 slums which formed the Hindley St. clearance area. This procedure - which doesn't seem to have been used either before or since - meant that the council could choose an arbitrary date (in this case June '72) on which it would become the legal owner of the site, dealing with compensation squabbles etc afterwards. The usual procedure, almost inevitably more lengthy, is to sort out objections & compensation before the council takes over ownership.

So the "vesting day" procedure left the way open for the relevant council committee (the property sub committee of the development & town planning committee) to settle the fate of the site quickly, and coincidentally before the May '72 elections came round. The sub-committee operated speedily. Under the powers delegated to it by the council, the property sub-committee decided on 31 Jan '72 that "...this area be offered for sale for residential purposes by advertisement as soon as possible". The council minutes for this meeting give no indication that the 3 men present - all of them Tory aldermen - even considered the possibility of building

(continued on page 7.)

Costs inflation

BLACKBURN MAGISTRATES Court still hasn't finished trying the cases of 5 anti-fascist demonstrators who were arrested on the 14th September. Rather surprisingly, each application for legal aid was turned down, even though one of the defendants was charged with police assault. Kingsley Read, chairman of the National Front, gave evidence for the prosecution. In cases heard so far, almost unprecedented fines of about £30 + costs of about £40 have been levied.

It's a knockout

M/C NCCL wants to know why the Greater M/C Police have decided to set up a Special Police Group (Riot Squad). NCCL is therefore sending a letter to the Chief Constable asking him to meet them & explain how large the Squad will be, what training it will have, on what occasions it will be used etc, etc.

"NCCL considers it a dangerous threat to Civil Liberties to have an anti-riot squad in this country" said Mr Rhys Vaughan, secretary of the M/C NCCL.

The tale of a shirt

"I WAS a poor, exploited, down-trodden consumer until I read Free Press. Now I know what the law can do for me", writes Ronald McKittrick - one of the many newly enlightened readers of last issue's article on how not to be conned by THEM. His story began last month.

Shock

Surging with consumer power, he strode confidently into 'Olivers' on Market Street, M/C. Totally alone & without legal advice, he bought himself a shirt (£4.50 & a real beauty). Breathlessly, he returned home with his prize. Shock! He found not only a nasty flaw in the material but one sleeve wasn't properly fitted

Horror

Pausing only to give a nonchalant shrug of his well-informed shoulders (pictured above), he returned the shirt to 'Olivers': "I want my money back please" he said, knowing his rights. A lackey describing himself as the under manager, & clearly no legal expert, said he had no authority to refund the money but offered him a credit note or another beautiful shirt. Mr McKittrick would have none of it. He stuck to his guns, "Money back. Nothing less". He strode to the door clutching his defective shirt. He would return when the manager was in.

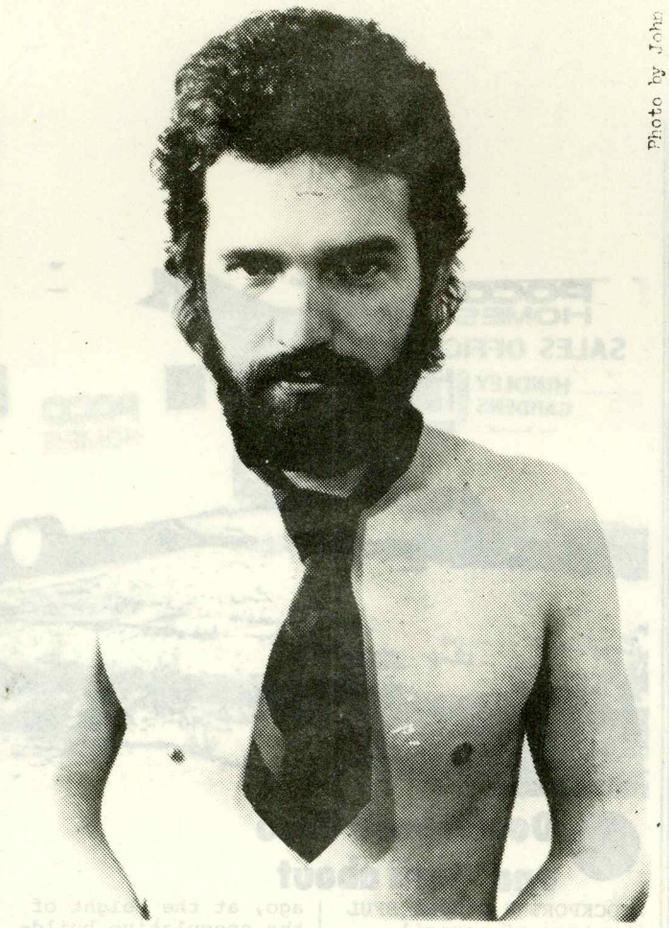


Photo by John

He did - the next day. His confrontation was with the manager, Mr E. Slater. "Money back please. I know my rights". But what did the manager say? He offered a credit note or another wonderful shirt! "NO, NO, NO. Money back... law...consumer...rights". But the manager was insistent. "If you want your money back you will have to take it further", he said coolly.

Clutching his shirt more tightly than ever, our dejected consumer staggered to the door.

Suddenly - an idea! "Stop that cheque". The scene moves to NatWest University Precinct Branch.

"Certainly. Would you fill in this form sir. I assure you the cheque will be stopped", said the bank lady.

Mr McKittrick stormed back into Olivers. He dumped the troublesome item under their noses & exited in triumph.

Oh no!

But 8 days later, there appeared a letter by his breakfast tray, from good old NatWest saying "We regret that we are unable to accept your instructions as the cheque was issued under your cheque card".

Back at the bank, our harrassed consumer asked, not unnaturally: "Why did you not tell me this before instead of waiting 8 days and letting me take the beautiful shirt back?" Answer: "The girl who spoke to you should've asked if you used a cheque card. Never mind, the bank will write to Olivers to try & get your money back".

Next day another Nat West letter arrived at breakfast: "We have tried unsuccessfully by telephone to contact the firm...we suggest you visit Olivers explaining the situation...we trust that the firm you are dealing with will be sufficiently reliable to enable you to resolve the matter on a retailer customer relationship".

Moral

As the once proud customer, now shirtless & moneyless, sinks slowly beneath his frosties, Freep points a moral to this tale:

Beware

1. BEWARE cheque cards. If you use them when writing a cheque, you won't be able to stop the cheque, even if the person you paid it to fails to deliver the goods.

Rights

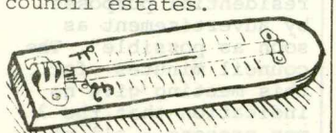
2. Whatever RIGHTS the law gives, in practice shops know that in most cases under £100 you won't take them to court. Reason - you have to pay your own legal costs in such cases.

Returns

3. When RETURNING goods, always take someone with you. Quietly point out your complaints. Above all, go in on a Saturday afternoon when it's crowded & if you meet resistance yell your complaint so that it echoes round the shop (or threaten to). It can often "enable you to resolve the matter on a retailer customer relationship".

Hot air

MANCHESTER'S ACCIDENT prone Housing dept is just about to land itself in another row with its tenants. The ding-dong hasn't yet started but it soon will. This time the argument will be about bills for the district heating systems employed on the new, centrally heated council estates.



At present, all tenants pay a fixed heating charge along with the rent, but in an attempt to cut down on costs, the corporation are now setting up an experiment in individual "heat metering". Tenants on the new Longsight 3/5 development have had gadgets which measure heat output attached to all the radiators in their houses. When the experiment starts, the tenants will continue to pay their fixed heating charge but after the meters have been read they will be given rebates or extra bills according to how much heat they've used.

The experiment is bound to cause controversy. Tenants who have to pay a heat surcharge will complain that most people only pay the fixed rate: tenants who are still on the fixed rate will complain that people with meters are getting rebates etc etc.

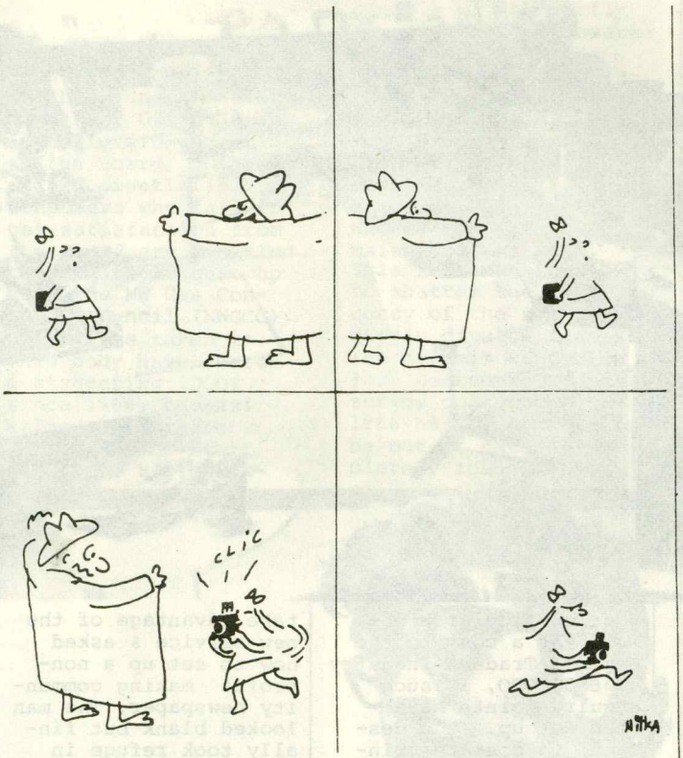
Much of a muchness

THE LITTLE box houses on Manchester's Longsight development not only look the same from the outside: they all look the same from the inside too. Every house in projects 3/5, 4/7, 8 & 9 has been decorated throughout with the same wallpaper. Nothing like encouraging individuality is there?

Living science

THE FIRST meeting of Manchester's newly-formed 'Science for People' group was held on Nov 14. About 50 people turned up at the Wheatsheaf to hear Charlie Clutterbuck of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science speak on industrial health hazards and to discuss the future role of the Manchester SfP group. Areas that were suggested should receive attention included workers' health and safety, environmental pollution, and military-sponsored University research. Working groups are to be set up to investigate specific problems and efforts will be made to establish links with local trade unions, tenants groups etc. with a view to developing joint action on issues of common concern.

Anyone interested in finding more out about the group contact: Brendan Gillespie, 86a, Parsonage Road, Heaton Moor, Stockport. Phone: 442 6827



Bugs off

FRANK HATTON, Moss Sides Labour MP is to talk about living conditions in the Moss Side development in a Commons debate later this month. He's been given permission by the Speaker to introduce an adjournment debate on "the problems of families living in multi-storey & deck access housing developments".

His chances of getting anything done seem a bit slim. Reg Freeson, a Junior Minister at the Dept of Environment recently said that, for example, the problem of bugs "...is something the Council must deal with themselves. But from what I am told I am satisfied that M/C are treating this matter urgently & seriously".

Building workers lobby

ON THE 8th November '74, 400 building workers demanded the immediate release of the 2 Shrewsbury pickets sentenced under the vicious conspiracy law, for their activity in the Building Workers Strike 1972.

Bert Smith, the leader of the "Building Workers Charter" said the judiciary had selected Des Warren & Rick Tomlinson for punishment out of the whole strike force. He urged the Labour & Trade Union movement to demand a free pardon for them. The meeting was called by the M/C & Salford Trades Council which hoped that would be the start of a campaign for : the immediate release of the two; repeal of the Conspiracy law; the defence & improvement of the right to picket.

The feeling of the meeting was expressed by a £140 collection to finance & join with the Labour MPs, T.U. leaders & the rest of the trade union movement in an almighty lobby of Parliament on 28th Nov.

Busy Lee claiming

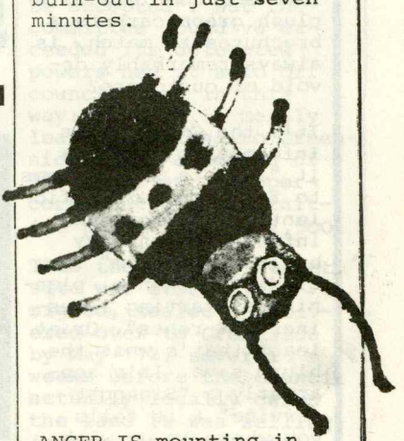
LIGHTBOWNE councillor, H.T.Lee, has been busy recently. In the last few months councillor Lee, vice-chairman of M/C's social services committee, has been on expenses paid council trips to Bournemouth, Eastbourne & Antwerp.

The 4 day Antwerp adventure in Sept resulted in a £72.48 hotel bill for the city. He also claimed a £4.50 luncheon fee during his October visit to Eastbourne. No doubt that lunch kept the chill sea breezes at bay.

Cheapjack straw

MOSS SIDE families are complaining bitterly about their straw houses. Internal walls in the new Moss Side Centre are made of 'stromit', a cheap compressed straw compound.

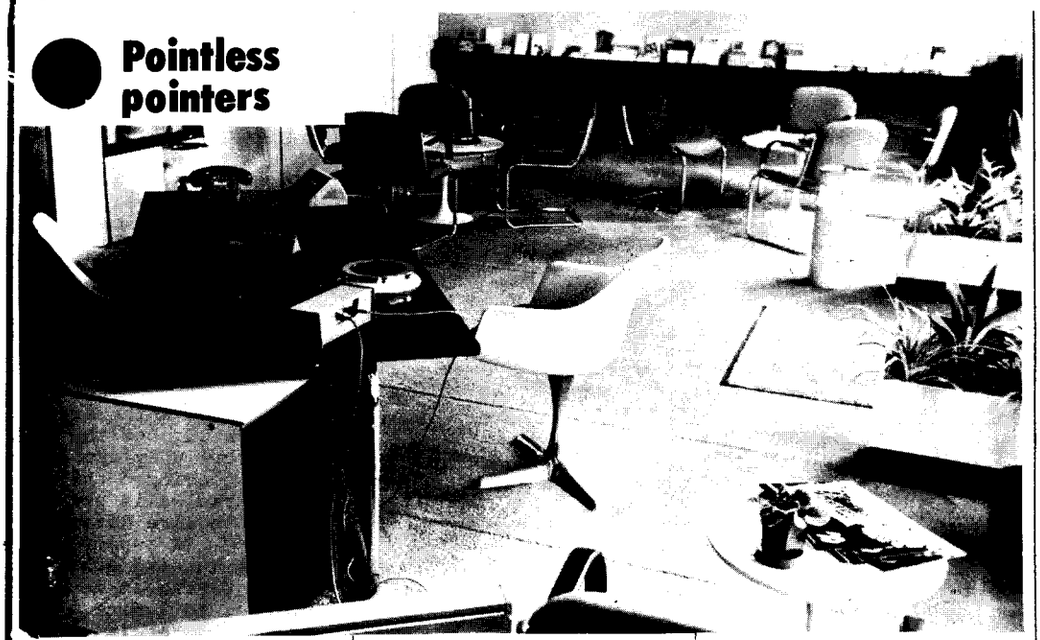
Residents are convinced that stromit walls provide an ideal breeding ground for the vermin & bugs which are rife throughout the district. They are equally convinced that the straw walls are a terrible fire hazard. Stromit is supposedly a slow burning substance, taking at least 30 mins to ignite & burn out. Yet in a recent fire at 610 Linbeck Close, a stromit house was reported as an 80% burn-out in just seven minutes.



ANGER IS mounting in the bug infested Moss Side area over what tenants claim to be a total neglect by M/C Council. At a recent meeting of the Moss Side neighbourhood council over 100 tenants confronted 2 prominent Labour councillors, W. Talbot (a local Moss Side representative) H.Paget (vice-chairman of housing), with a deand for immediate rehousing. The tenants consider the verminous bug-ridden, straw walled houses & flats to be beyond redemption.

The tenants were hardly placated by the councillors' opinion that their demand was unrealistic. The meeting later passed a resolution, stating that unless councillors Talbot & Paget, as local Moss Side council representatives, proved themselves more useful, then the Neighbourhood Council would stand candidates against them in the next local election.

Pointless pointers



HAVE YOU ever wondered why the smart green shop at the top of Oxford Rd, complete with plush green carpets & brochures to match, is always remarkably devoid of customers?

It's the Small Firms Information Centre & it "assists small firms to function more efficiently" by providing information on "any business problem" including "finance, planning & starting a business, & rents". Or at least that's what the blurb says. It's apparently a "Signpost service" & it tells you where to go with your particular problems. At a cost to the Dept of Trade & Industry of £250,000, 10 such enquiry points have been set up. It's designed to operate principally by telephone. So why is it housed on such a prestigious site? Confirming that 85% of the enquiries were by phone, the Centre failed to give a satisfactory answer to that question. With roughly 80 enquiries a week, and 85% of them by phone, Freep calculates that only 2 or 3 people a day walk through the Centre's magnificent green doors.

Freep went along to take advantage of the new service & asked how to set up a non-profit making community newspaper. The man looked blank but finally took refuge in his complicated filing system & produced a generalised glossy pamphlet that was totally useless. Freep continued to ask questions until our advisor let us into his secret."To be perfectly frank" he said "I'm ignorant". He then suggested we contact the Newspaper section of the DTI in London. Non the wiser, Freep staggered out.

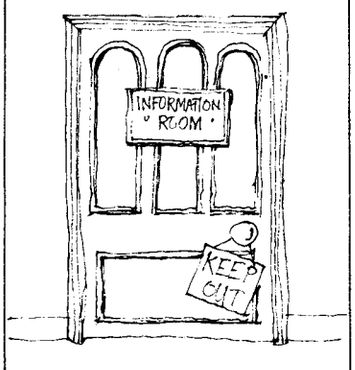
Perhaps we didn't ask the right questions but then 2 lawyers went in. They asked for information about possible sites, probable rents & the cost of running a surburban office. The Centre could not help much there either & hastily pointed our disappointed lawyers in the direction of the Town Hall.

A recent newspaper advert for the Centre reads:"It's not your job to be a mine of information. It's ours". Oh yes?

Identity charade

UNLESS YOU'VE got lots of time to waste,don't bother going to the Town Hall to check on the expenses claimed by M/C councillors.The town is still making it very difficult for members of the public to check on such claims. At present you have to go to room 41 of the Town Hall & provide proof of your identity. Ominously, this room has the words 'Detective Office' stamped on the door. You will then be seated in a busy office & allowed to look through the expenses sheets while a Town Hall official watches over you to make sure you don't run off with the vital documents.

Freep has absolutely no objection to the principle of allowing councilllors to claim legitimate expenses. Indeed, it removes one (but by no means all) of the barriers to adequate representation of working people on our councils. But the Town Hall should provide facilities for easy hassle-free access to the expenses claims. The current system,



could almost have been designed to discourage casual enquirers.Perhaps it was.

People wronged

PARTINGTON RESIDENTS are worried that Trafford Council is attempting to stamp out self help community development schemes operating in their area. Their concern follows Trafford's refusal to grant further cash to Partington's Young Volunteer Force. Since it went to Partington in 1971, YVF has helped establish playgroups, play centres, adventure playgrounds etc & has also assisted the Partington Peoples Rights Office, which has given effective support & encouragement to hundreds of individuals & families with problems of housing, sickness & unemployment.

Councillor J.B.Humphreys, Trafford Finance Committee chairman, has said that the grant has been refused because Trafford Social Services would be taking over the YVF's job. "There was no point in paying them any more when we were going to do their work".Trafford hasn't yet made a decision about further grants for the Peoples Rights Office (which is funded separately from YVF) but local people fear that Trafford will be no more generous to the Rights Office than it has been to YVF.

Many Partington residents are sceptical that Trafford's social service dept will do the necessary jobs as effectively as the present voluntary agencies which at least have strong local roots. They also feel that the professionalisation of such services will hinder the development of community involvement. It's also difficult to see how the Social Services Dept will be able to take over the work of the Peoples Rights Office since many of the complaints handled by them, concern failures on the part of the 'official' community care agencies.

What a gas

A RECENT survey of consumer satisfaction with the North West Gas Board revealed a "disquieting" level of complaints according to a Manchester University researcher. Dr. Gerhard Ennemoser interviewed 300 customers of the Gas Board in Stockport & found that 25% felt they had reason for complaint in the previous 12 months. This is remarkably high considering that no North Sea gas conversion (a notorious source of complaint) had been undertaken in the area. Of those who actually did complain to the Board, 30% remained disatisfied. Consumers who fail to get satisfaction from the Board are entitled to take their case up with the NW Gas Consumer Council (NWGCC) Complaints taken to this body have soared a staggering 1000% since 1966, necessitating an increase in its full time staff from 1 to 8. The increasing number of complaints may be partly due to a greater awareness of the NWGCC's existence but Dr.Ennemoser's survey revealed that only a tiny fraction (10%) of consumers actually knew of the Consumer Council. Of those who did contact NWGCC, one fifth remained disatisfied. This research is bound to shatter the complacency of the Board who rarely divulge statistics of this kind. The last Consumers Council survey conducted in 1966 has been shown to be out of date & completely inadequate.

With prejudice

MANCHESTER NCCL Group arranged a meeting on 31st October on the topic of racialism & the law. The speaker was Rudy Narayan, a West Indian barrister from London, who had been suspended from the bar for six months because of his comments about judicial prejudice in the case of Donat Gomez. The other reason for his suspension was that he had written many articles in the West Indian World and other magazines complaining about prejudice in British courts.

Rudy Narayan spoke about the Donat Gomez trial in Birmingham.His conclusions were that black people can only get justice in British courts within the framework of a National legal service.

He also proposed a system of control over judges. He explained that at present,judges could only be removed from their positions by a general majority of both Houses of Parliament. He believed that it would be possible for M.P's to raise a motion in the House of Commons for the removal of a judge who was unfair to defendants & that this motion could be passed by a simple majority.

The general feeling of the meeting, which was well attended, was that judicial prejudice in the law could not be dealt with on its own. It had to be seen in the light of a general political and social change in society. The lesson of the meeting was that Rudy Narayan may have been the beginning of a campaign by the judicial establishment to clamp down on the activities of left wing lawyers. It may be more difficult in the future for anti establishment views to be expressed openly in court.

Join our club

FREEP 28 reported that Stockport council was about to ratify generous grants to a long list of profit making 'sports' clubs which operate their own licensed bars. But spirited resistance by the town's Labour councillors has forced the recreation & culture committee to reconsider its original recommendations.
At a recent meeting of the committee, the Labour members again proposed that no grants be made to sports clubs with bars. This time the Tories elected not to oppose the motion outright. Instead they managed to carry an amendment through to the effect that no grants be made to such clubs and the finance previously allocated for this purpose be applied to sports club development.

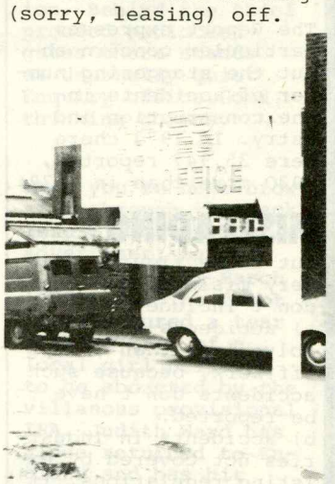
This of course, leaves it open to the boozing clubs to re-apply for grants for new blow-football sets, darts boards etc whilst still making profits on their bars. Still, there was one drop of comfort for the Labour group. The committee reversed an earlier decision to make grants to British Legion clubs with bars.

Page 3 deal continued

council houses on the site.

The necessary adverts were placed, & on 24 April '72 the committee met to take its final decision. This time only 2 men attended the meeting, Tory aldermen J.E.Walton and W.C.Knight (or Walter C.Knight as he is always coyly described in council documents), but this didn't stop the committee considering the seven tenders which had been received. The 'committee of 2' resolved that "the highest tender amounting to £132,500 from Messrs Longden & Sutcliffe on behalf of Greenside Development, subject to the approval of the District Valuer be accepted". But the committee would've exceeded its delegated powers had it sold off council land in this way: instead it merely leased the land to Greenside - for a period of 999 years at a peppercorn rent plus an initial payment of £132,500.

Thus the Hindley Street site was effectively signed, sealed & delivered over to Greenside by May '72, several weeks before the council actually legally owned the land it was selling (sorry, leasing) off.



What a shame that this honest attempt to provide land for building companies should have boomeranged so badly on both the Tories and the property company. In fact. it looks as though the only people who will benefit from this sad affair are those families from Stockport's waiting list who could move in to the Poco houses.

GRAVE RISKS AT

"Increased industrial activity seems to result in some increase in risk & if this be so then once again I must reiterate how necessary it is to plan for safety as well as for production, if increased prosperity is not to be bought at the expense of increased death & injury".

There speaks Bryan Harvey, Chief Inspector of the Factory Inspectorate in his recently published Report for 1973. He was expressing "disappointment" about the increased number of reported accidents at work during 1973. The overall increase was 5.6%. The horrifying figures are that 272,518 accidents were reported (14,381 more than in 1972), with 549 deaths (81 more than in 1972).

The Report expresses particular concern about the staggering number of accidents in the construction industry. In 1973 there were 35,947 reported, (930 more than in 1972).

MISLEADING

But these figures are very misleading. They don't include:
a) accidents which involve less than 3 days off work, because such accidents don't have to be reported.
b) accidents in industries not covered by existing regulations. It's estimated that about 5 million workers are not covered by the present safety laws.
c) accidents which are covered by other reports ie under the Shops Offices & Railways Act.
d) accidents the employer should've reported but didn't.
e) diseases which are not yet notifiable.

There are therefore thousands of accidents & diseases which never get into the record books. Patrick Kinnersly, in his book called 'Hazards at Work' estimates that over one million people are off work with injuries or industrial diseases every year.

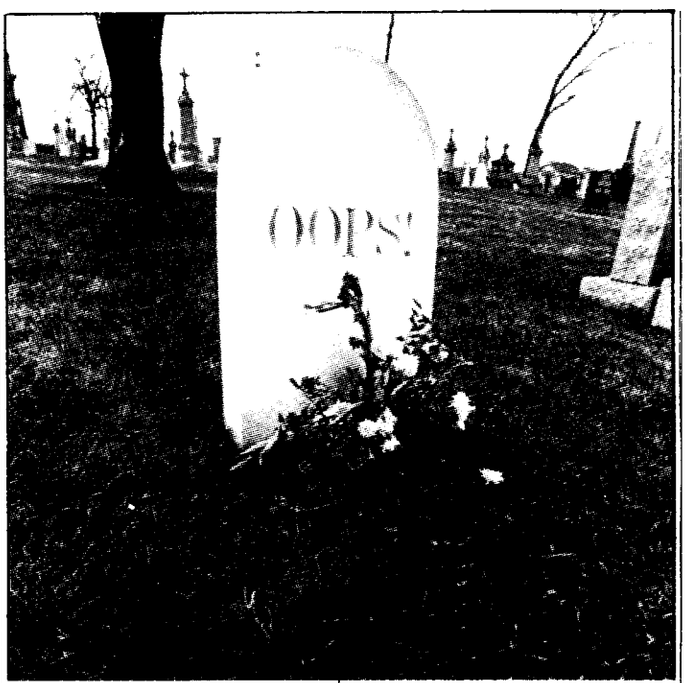
"I believe industry has come to think of health & safety, not in terms of a coordinated policy to protect workpeople, but almost in terms of physical contraptions which will keep the Factory Inspectors out of their hair", says Mr Harvey.

Many workers can testify to the fact that employers give their factories a quick wash & brush up when they know the Inspector is on his way. The FI can enter premises without prior warning but they rarely do.

INADEQUATE

Among the FI's priorities for concern, is the control of noise at work. On their visits to specially selected factories, they give advice on how

noise hazards can be reduced but the FI admits that the action being taken in "well over half the factories visited does not measure up to what is needed" because of "inadequate support or real backing from management"



There's obviously no race between employers for an improvement in safety provisions. So what can workers do? The FI might not be the most effective organisation in the world, but it can sometimes help. Workers should therefore:
a) phone the FI when employers are breaking the law.
b) never agree to clean up before an Inspector's visit. If the evidence is hidden, a worker might be signing his own death warrant.
c) ask the management to let a workers' representative go round with the Inspector.

SANCTIONS

The FI do prosecute employers sometimes but "There can be no question of invoking this sanction for every irregularity which is detected", says the Report.

But why should this be so? Other laws are rigidly enforced so why should employers who cause injury, death & disease be let off so lightly?
In 1973, there were 3,983 separate inform-

ations but only 1,782 prosecutions. The fines imposed on erring employers were pitifully small. The average fine for breaches of safety regulations was £106, & for breaches of health provisions £47 With fines like that & a knowledge that the FI is reluctant to prosecute, it's hardly surprising that many employers prefer not to invest in safety precautions.

ACT

It's often argued, & the new Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 reinforces the argument, that management & workers have a common interest in safety at

WORK

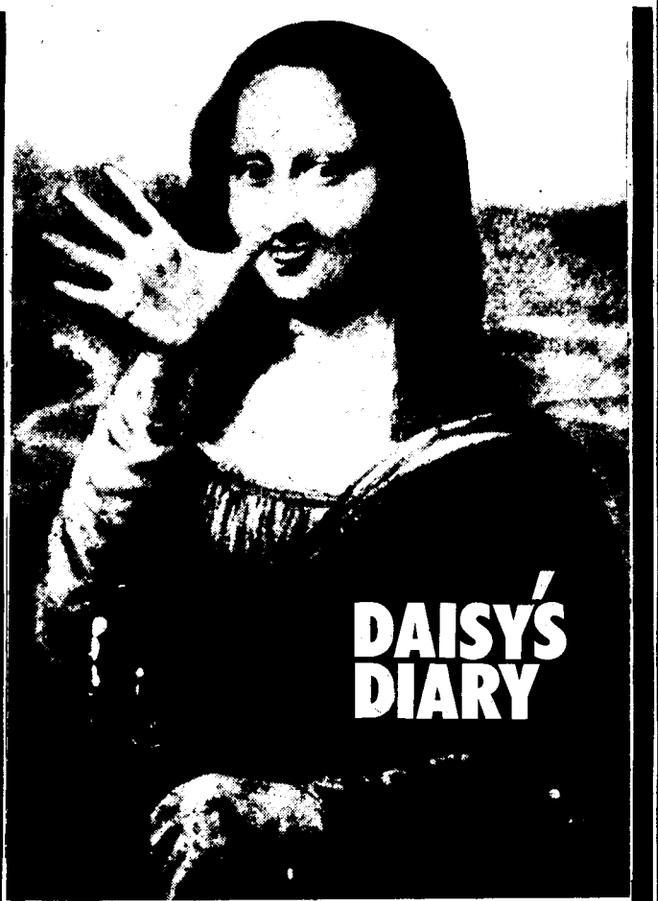
work. But do they? An employer's interest is to make profit & therefore spend as little as possible on non-essentials. Safety precautions cost money & are often extremely expensive. So why should employers bother if they think they can geaway with it?

"Ideally the company would have liked to have had an arrangement whereby the whole length would have been scaffolded. But this was out of the question because of the expense which would have been involved". - Mr Green of Babcox & Wilcox,giving evidence after the death of a welder on one of its plants.The company was fined just £600. (extract from Hazards at Work).

There are however,some provisions in the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 which might result in safer working conditions. But this Act is basically one which enables laws to be made. It should therefore be treated with caution. The current law imposes 2 kinds of duty on an employer:
a) an ABSOLUTE duty, which means he must do certain things.
b) a QUALIFIED duty, which means that a hazard might exist but an employer only has to protect his workers against it 'as far as practicable' or 'as far as reasonably practicable'. This last one is the weakest of all yet the new Act is riddled with this expression.

POSITIVE

What the Act does do however, is set up a Health & Safety Commission & Executive to carry out research and submit proposals for the making of Regulations. Trade Unions are represented on these bodies & they should therefore press for more absolute duties to be imposed on employers.



One of the more unusual obligations enshrined in Part IX of the M/C Corporation Act 1924 is the annual licensing of establishments for massage or special treatment.The Health Dept was intrigued recently to discover 4 businesses in the city offering "relaxing massage for men" which included "assisted showers" in their repertoire of services. The committee was horrified to discover that the businesses were set up in run down buildings in the city & employed young, unqualified girls to carry out the massage. Acting with firmness & resolution, 2 of them were closed down on the grounds of unsatisfactory premises & unqualified staff. The most recent information that we have is that the other 2 establishments were "still the subject of the dept's attention". No doubt steps are being taken to ensure that men are assisted with their showers by highly qualified personnel only, in clean & salubrious premises.

Manchester police have had so many cars pinched from their Stockport Rd pound that they've started to padlock the gates to keep the thieves out. This sensible precaution has had unexpected side effects. It means the public can't get in to the police station. Behind the thief proofed padlocked gates there stands as unusually quiet Enquiry office.Good thinking Holmes.

When you're next browsing through the back issues of Stockport Advertiser, have a look at the 23 March 1972 copy. The front page featured a tear jerking tale of a local girl believed to be abducted by the villanous provisional IRA. Judith Ward has since returned to England and has hit more prominent front pages with a bang.

A North Lancs paper has just been busted by the Press Council It's offence? It printed a list of expenses claimed by local councillors under the headline 'spot the fiddler.'

FILTHY FAC Manchester

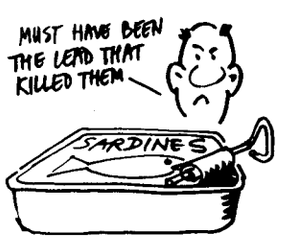
The most recent Report from the Manchester Health Department covers 1973 & is the last report of its kind. Many of the department's responsibilities have been transferred to the Environmental Health Dept of the Greater M/C District Council. Although the Chief Public Health Inspector expresses "the hope that future reports will be prepare-" there is no statutory obligation to do this, whereas there has been in the past. Judging by the host of environmental & health problems raised in the 1973 Report, it's evident that an annual report of this type is essential if the people of M/c are to have the least inkling about what is going on.

HYGIENE

There were 324 contraventions of the Food Hygiene Regulations but only about one third of these were prosecuted. Although a welcome increase in the willingness to prosecute has occurred since 1972, when only 3% reached the courts (see Freep 19), the average "penalty" imposed by the law slumped from £11.80 to less than £7.

LABELLING

About 50 samples were found which broke the labelling of Food Regulations, introduced in Jan 1973. The Public Analyst, J.B.Aldred, points out that these regulations didn't



come into effect until 6 yrs after the Govmt had decided to introduce them & that the number of labelling offences was "disproportionately large" considering that manufacturers had been given "a considerable length of time to modify their labels". This demonstrates the obvious contempt shown by many food firms for the consumer & yet the only response by the Dept was to write a letter to the law breaking firms.

ADULTERATION

Of 119 samples found by the Public Analyst to be unsatisfactory, only 17 led to court cases & in 14 instances a caution was given. Some of the more unsavoury incidents were: woodlice in 2 bags of fish & chips; rodent excreta in bread; and a sliver of steel in a ham sandwich. A tin of sardines contained 12 ppm of lead, more than twice the permitted maximum. Of the cases that reached court, the results were characteristically pathetic. A

dairy farmer who sold milk with a fat deficiency of 25% was fined £20. A butcher who used illegal preservatives in mince meat refused to sell the Inspector a further sample and was prosecuted for obstruction. The court imposed the crushing fine of £10 for this flagrant disregard of the inspectorate's authority

AIR POLLUTION

Although there's been a further small reduction in the levels of smoke & SO_2, these are still very high compared with most parts of the country. It's also difficult to get an accurate picture of the problem because the system of measurement itself is admitted to be "arbitrary & relatively insensitive". This is due to the fact that only 24 hour averages are recorded which may conceal much higher peaks of concentration. Applying a technique that attempts to take this into account, the Report reveals the very disturbing information that "hazardous conditions" or air pollution could have occurred a number of times during the winter months. Hazardous conditions are defined by the Dept. of Environment as those where SO_2 concentrations of 500 ug/m^3 are combined with smoke levels over 250 ug/m^3. These levels have been shown to have a definate effect on the human body. The estimate of the Health Dept for the winter of 1972/73 is as follows:

Pollution measuring stations	Number of "hazardous days"
Crumpsall	7
Monsall	8
Clayton	13
Central	2
Hulme	3
Rusholme	8
Withington	1
Wythenshawe	1

28 contraventions of the Clean Air Act were taken to court where fines averaging £18 were imposed. The Health Dept condemns these as "derisorily low" & points out that the penalties failed to act as a deterrent since they cost the polluter far less than it would cost to avoid the contraventions. One firm, with 2 previous convictions, was fined £10, £15 & £25 for three separate "gross offences", all heard on the same day.

WORKERS HEALTH

1,272 contraventions of the Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act led to a mere 18 prosecutions (that's 18 times more than in 1972 mind), for which fines averaging £7.60 were imposed. Apart from

The salubrious city of Salford has recently published its

Another newly published Health Report is that of the salubrious city of Salford.

Congratulations are in order to Salford, not only for winning the Arnold Marsh Clean Air Award but also for developing a stunningly simple solution to the problem of vandalism of the public loos - they're locked.

Salford appears to be something of a pioneer in the area of noise control as well. The Salford docks apparently do not create enough noise to warrant any action being taken. How did Salford achieve this paragon of pianissimo activity you might well ask (especially if you're near the docks). Simple. They took the noise level readings at night time.

In the area of food hygiene, Salford has taken on the role of an explorer into the foreign- the exotic &

ACTS

er

this feeble enforcement of the existing legislation, the Health Dept admits that the existing laws are often "outstripped by the pace of events".

VERMIN

As in the previous year, the 1973 incidence of infestations is up. Rats are up to 2,697 cases. Mice are up to 4,421. There's no doubt where the problem originates. "Defects in design & construction" in new buildings have been found by the public health inspectors as in 1972. The Report argues that "proofing of premises ought to be usual practice" yet the construction industry will remain impervious to this plea unless the force of law is invoked. It's encouraging to note that the absence of an insect disinfectation service for private tenants & residents (exposed in Freep 19) is now recognised by the Dept. They express the hope that "a new comprehensive disinfestation service will be created".

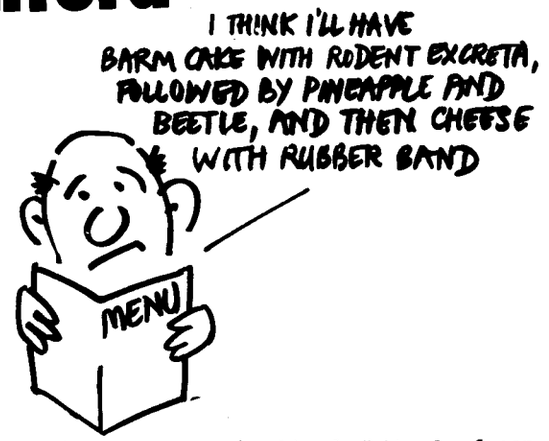
NOISE

Environmental problems involving noise are on the increase. The Health Report is concerned that the existing criteria for assessing 'nuisance' from noise may be inapplicable in many cases. This is because the L10 system of noise measurement depends on the concept of diminished road noise between midnight & 6am. Yet the Report emphasises that there is "known erosion of these limits in cities".The problem is of pressing importance since it's predicted that more complaints will arise in the future.

GENERAL

This survey of the M/C Health Dept's activities shows that the traditional problems in controlling practices detrimental to peoples' health- whether it be the quality of food or the level of noise - are still with us. The increasing concern of the people who suffer from the effects of these is shown by the fact that consumer complaints on food quality more than doubled between 1972 and 1973. While one can only endorse Chief Public Health Inspector E.W.Foskett's protest that "punishments awarded are often less severe than the offences merit...& often less than the local authority spends in officers' time attending court, let alone in investigating and prosecuting the case"- it remains of concern that the role of "supervision, instruction & education" is given greater emphasis than enforcement. History has proved that strict laws & effective implementation are the only ways to combat private greed in the interests of social health.

Salford



the downright strange. From the Public Analysts Report, we find lurking in a sample of Chocolate Assorted the larvae of Ephestia, the cocoa moth; in a miniature hovis loaf, a mangled knat; a wasp in sliced peaches; a tenebrionid beetle in pineapple slices; & rodent excreta in a sample of barmcake & a large white loaf.

Other samples that had something of the unusual in them were a sliced white loaf contaminated with oil & iron scale; cheddar cheese with rubber band surprise; garden peas & corned beef both containing stones; & Toasted bread containing plaster. It was bad year for dandelion & burdock - one sample had deposits of yeast, another was straight vinegar. 20% of the ice cream samples taken from the vendors and manufacturers in the Salford area were unsatisfactory, a finding that spurred Salford to smack the naughty knuckles of the vendors & manufacturers by pointing out that personal hygiene is a good thing when processing & handling ice cream.

At present, a special survey is enquiring into the condition of laundrettes in the Salford area. As laundrettes don't at present come under the regulations laid down by the Offices, Shops & Railway Premises Act 1963, & since a serious accident which befell a child in a Salford laundrette, they pose some concern to the Health Committee. It will be interesting to note the results of this survey & what actions, if any,arise from it. Many premises don't come under the Offices etc Act(see above), notably the premises occupying a maze of railway arches in Salford.Conditions are poor with bad lighting, spray painting fumes, piles of rubbish & in one case,sanitary conveniences consisting of staff urinating in a corner of the railway arch.

For all the above complaints, prosecutions in Salford have been literally nil.

And what about all the people waiting on the housing lists who may want to claim infirmity & so housing priority? Visits to such people are deemed "...a time consuming exercise"peculiar to Salford, and isn't generally considered to be part of a health visitor's work

In the future, it will be necessary to ensure that health visitors have more realistic workloads if they are to function efficiently in areas which require their special skills. Many of these families aren't known to the health visitor & one would question its value in view of this. One wonders if it is known to them that there is a person with asthma who has been on the housing list since 1944.

Shack up in SSHAC houses

AFTER THREE months of negotiation, waiting on committees, lawyers, & the like, Stockport Shelter Housing Action Group has at last begun to live up to its name. Two homeless families have now moved in to the first two short-life properties made available by the council. One is in Belmont & one is in Edgeley. The Group intends to have several more houses occupied by the end of the month.

The final agreement through which the council allows the Group to use up to 20 houses was signed on 1st Nov: a significant event. (It is the first such agreement reached outside London). If the scheme goes according to plan, this number could well be doubled in the new year.

There's no shortage of either empty houses or homeless families in Stockport, & what the Action Group has done is bring the two together. The Group's organiser, Damian Grant says that although some of the houses they've looked at are in an appalling condition (more often through vandalism than structural defects or damp) others are "embarrassingly good": embarrassing for the council who should never have let such places stand idle while whole families are cooped up in single rooms in hotels.

When the Public Health Inspector has looked over an empty property, the Group carries out necessary repairs to make the place habitable (when they have the resources). The Group then charges a low rent to the family (or, since there's no official tenancy, a weekly payment) to cover costs & keep the new work going.

The families themselves are doing more of the work, & although organisation & transport are at present being provided by volunteer helpers, it's hoped that the Group will become progressively more self sufficient. Certainly there is a lot of support at the weekly Tuesday evening meetings at the Tusky Dog, the community transport shop on Brinksway. Anyone, homeless or helper, is welcome to attend.

The Group counts on receiving cash support from the council in recognition of the job they're doing, & also of the amount they will soon be saving the social services when all the families are able to leave the hotels. It's already been helped by the encouraging attitude of local firms & services. Allinsons of Stockport have given the Group immediate credit facilities for purchasing to instal plumbing, roofing, & plastering materials. The gas & electricity boards are also proving co-operative.

It seems a good thing so far. Anyone interested should contact Damian Grant, 7 Norman Rd, Heaton Moor, Stockport. (tel 432 3752)-

STAG horns in

THE 'ROAD LOBBY' - a group representing business interests with a stake in road transport, has recently been exposed in a report published by Friends of the Earth. Until now, the lobby has exerted most pressure at a national level ie. promoting the motorway programme & opposing the railways. Changes in transport planning and local govmt organisation, have caused the road lobby to try and develop local pressure for more roads, As a result, Manchester has recently acquired a group known as STAG - the Surface Transport Action Group. The glossy brochure of this peculiarly titled group presses for "an efficient road network" and demands "the extension of the motorway network in & across the Metropolitan County"

One of its members, Mr Jack Fletcher, recently pleaded with local councillors that if new roads were not built, "it would mean imposing savage & unacceptable restraints on the use of the car".

A similar sentiment is expressed by STAG chairman Norman Quick who states "it is absolute nonsense to think you can solve basic traffic problems merely by banning cars & lorries from the centres of cities & towns". Mr Quick's views on traffic problems are not really surprising because he is chairmen of H & J Quick Ltd which made a record 1973 trading profit of £516,000 from the sale of Ford motor vehicles. Another active member of STAG is the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, whose President, Mr K A Millichap, is not only a pal of Mr Quick but a fellow director on the board of the giant Ford dealers.

Other affiliated organisations with a commercial interest in road transport, are the Freight Transport Association, the Motor Agents Assoc, Shell-Mex & BP Ltd. Local transport planners will no doubt be wary of advice on transport policy from such quarters.

The report exposing STAG is "Wheels within Wheels, A Study of the Road Lobby", available at FOE, 9 Poland St, London W1. Price 60p + 10p postage.

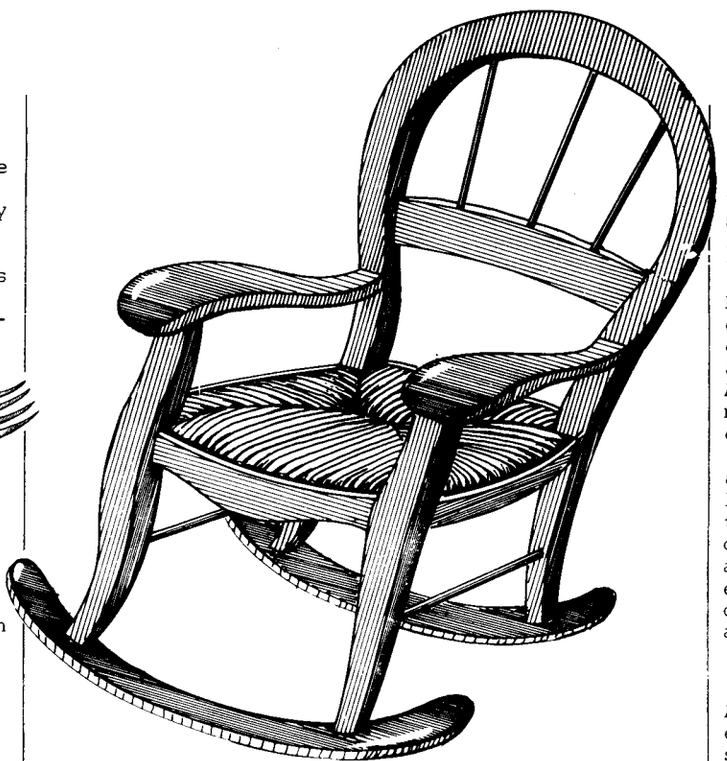
Say that again

HOW ABOUT this gem from "Housing Monthly". It's a calculation showing how long you will probably spend on the housing waiting list.

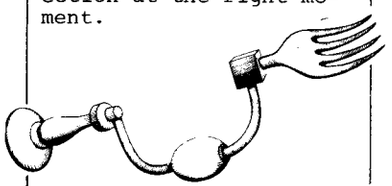
$$\frac{1}{k\lambda + nd} + \frac{1}{k\lambda + (n-1)d} \cdots \frac{1}{k\lambda + d} + \frac{1}{k\lambda} = \sum_{r=0}^{n} \frac{1}{k\lambda + rd}$$

seeds of thyme
Gifts, Candles, Pottery, Beautiful things
Crossway
Didsbury

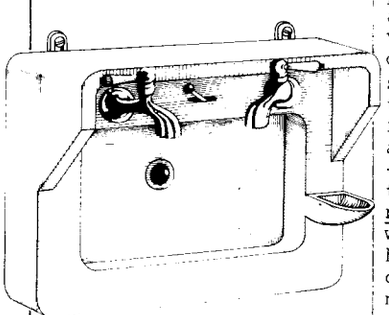
Snap up a snip



WHERE DO YOU go for cheap furniture? Most people need low-cost furnishing at some stage in their lives (while in a student flat, as newly hitched or hitched-up couples etc) & few of us can rely on relatives or friends to toss a 4 poster bed or a chippendale chair in our direction at the right moment.



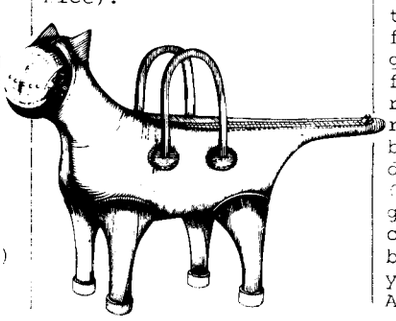
New furniture is normally out of the question - even 'Basic Habitat' or the cheapest do-it-yourself kits imported from Hong Kong - & so you find yourself looking round for something second hand. Perhaps you land up at a 'junk shop! Be warned. Many junk shops risk prosecution under the Trades Descriptions Act by calling themselves 'antique' shops, & they ask prices to match. The days of the real 'snip' junk shop - in M/C anyway - are over.



You're better off going to an auction, which is where the junk shops/ antique shops buy most of their stuff anyway (the rest comes from house sales & house clearances, which you can also get in on if you keep your eyes open) Auctions are held regularly in the Manchester area - you could go to half a dozen a week if you were a real fanatic - and can be fun to attend as well as saving you a lot of money.

Simple

The routine is simple. Look in the Saturday papers (or your local paper) for the auction adverts. Go along to view the day before or on the morning of the sale, which is normally time enough. Looking round can itself provide a good deal of interest - & a few irrelevant temptations too. (Do I need the 2 marble topped washstands I have in my house? No, but they were cheap & they do look nice).



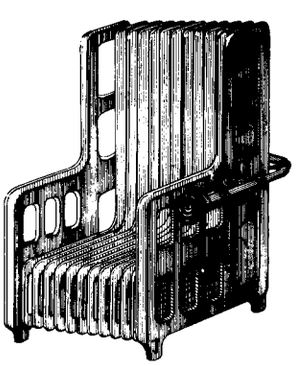
If you see a cooker, a chair, a welsh dresser or a cat-o'-nine tails that takes your fancy, it's perfectly in order to ask one of the staff of the place (who might look like Arthur Negus's father) for a rough idea of what it will 'make'. He'll usually be helpful. Not only that, you can leave a bid with him if you can't stay for the sale. (With surprising results: I once left a bid of £15 on a chest of drawers, & came back to find I'd got it for £13. No sharp practice there!) You'd normally give a 10% tip or so for this service.

In my 10yrs experience of auction going, many things have been sold for absurdly low prices; given away really. TV's, fridges, cookers, beds, radios, chairs, wardrobes, carpets, crockery, bicycles are all knocked down for next to nothing. Of course, newish or good things will usually command a fair price but still much less than you'd pay anywhere else. At the last sale I went to, 2 renovated welsh dressers (complete with glass handles etc) went for £15 each: near identical things were on sale 'cheap' in Habitat for £60. You can't afford not to go.

Bidding isn't a mystery either. I've never purchased anything by mistake - except deliberately All you have to do is make your bid loud and clear to the auctioneer (who doesn't miss much) & shake your head or look away if you have to drop out. And although you'll be bidding against dealers, often enough, you won't encounter auction 'rings' at this level.

Pay up

After the sale, you're expected to pay on the spot & clear the lots within 24 hours. You may need a van, or a friend's estate car. (Pianos cost a minimum of £5 to cart).



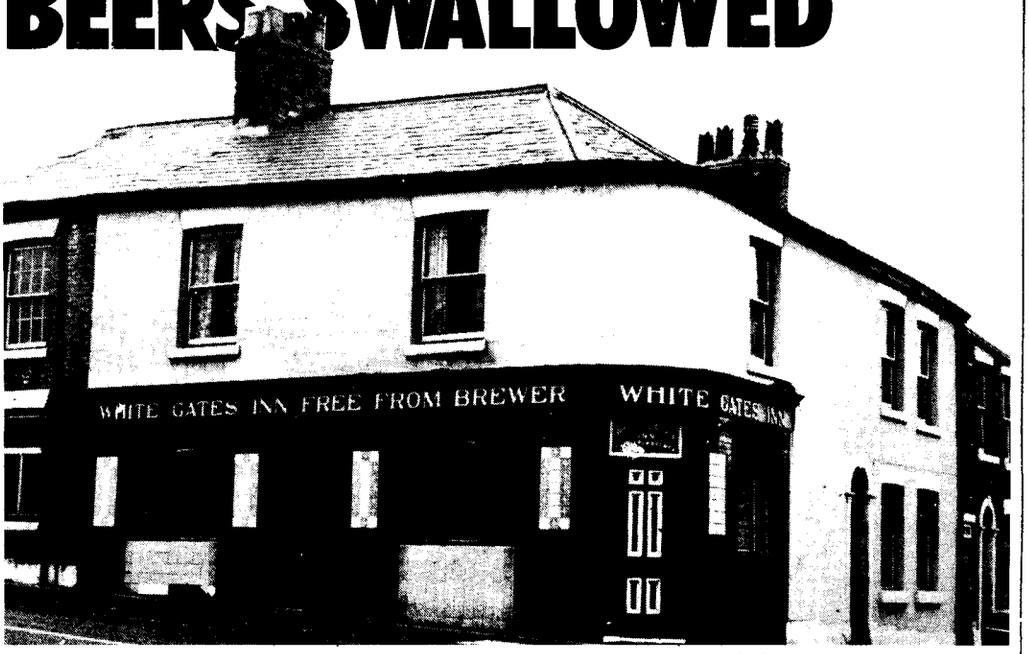
Finally, a few auction rooms you might like to try for a start:

* Lloyd Street Auction rooms now at the Church Hall, Ainstey Rd, off Moss Lane East, M/C 13. auctions every Friday 6pm.
* Artingstall & Hind, 38) Deansgate (Knott Mill); every Tuesday 11am
* Capes Dunn, 38 Charles Street; irregularly so watch for details.

Happy hunting.

Manchester
Free Press

BEERS SWALLOWED



THE WHITE GATES pub in Hyde will soon be under new management. For this pub, one of the few free houses in Manchester, is being bought by the energetic campaignfor real ale, CAMRA. It's the first pub CAMRA has bid for, and will cost £16,000. The money will be raised by the issue of £1 shares, mainly to its members. So they can really put their money where their mouths are.

TAKE OVER

For the members have vehemently attacked the policies of the large national brewers. Because local beers have disappeared, because beer has been watered down, and because pubs have been tarted up without consideration for the locals. And they've laid the blame squarely on the men who control these huge companies.

These men are planning to centralise all of their beer production in a few vast plants. For example, the largest of Watneys breweries is at Newton Heath. And this produces not only all of Wilsons for the north, but also the other Watneys brands that are sold all over the Midlands.

This kind of policy not unnaturally leads to the closure of the smaller local breweries that have been taken over.

TIME PLEASE

A blatant example is Bass Charrington who have spent £25m on its plant at Runcorn to make it the biggest brewery in Europe. This will result in the closure, loss of jobs and beer at ten breweries. It has just closed Burnley (Massey's) and Stone (Joules). Other in nearby Liverpool (Bents) and Blackpool (Catterall and Swarbrick) are due for closure soon.

Threlfall Chesters in Salford and Liverpool and the Black - burn brewery are also under the threat of closure as a result of the new chemical engineering plant at Samlesbury, thanks to Big Head Whitbread.

SAD

What is more sad is that some of the local independants are starting to follow the bad habits of the nationals instead of serving their localities. Samuel Smiths of Tadcaster has recently closed its brewery in Rochdale. It is now merely a bottling plant.

Maybe their managements mistakenly think that this is the only way to survive. But they may think again when they consider how Watneys & Courage have in their turn succumbed to larger combines that took them over.

When Maxwell Joseph's Grand Metropolitan swallowed Watney Mann, it was described as the biggest takeover ever. But it may have bitten off more than it could chew. Watney's trying to avoid the Grand Met takeover, gobbled up International Distillers & Vintners first, & then Samuel Webster of Halifax.

FOILED

Watney's attempts to protect themselves failed. And it doesn't seem to have worked for Grand Met either. They paid £420 million for Watneys in 1972. But their shares had declined to about half their value in June. At that time they were worth 99p. Now you can pick them up for around 30p. What a snip. In March they also reported a drop in profits of 38% - £1million due to the brewing section. Poor things.

FATE

Barnsley brewery has suffered almost the same fate as Websters. In 1961 they were taken over by John Smiths who were then taken over by Courage, who were then taken over by Imperial Tobacco, who have now shown so much interest in brewing that they intend to close Barnsley and eliminate real beer from all John Smith's pubs.

MANIA

Bass Charrington & Whitbread have been no better. But the manic takeover activity has slowed down recently. Bass Charrington & Whitbread are however hovering like vultures to get their claws into thousands more locals. In particular, Whitbread has a 20% equity stake in Boddingtons - and a director on the board. This is as a result of 'helping' to fight off Allied Breweries' 1969 takeover bid. Boddington drinkers should note that in the 60's Whitbread used this exact tech-ique to take over 21 breweries & to close down 15. Not to be outdone, Boddingtons recently built up their stake in Holts (Cheetham). To prevent a takeover old man.

Bass Charrington

Castletown	Isle of Man	33.8%
Higsons	Liverpool	12.5%
Camerons	Hartlepool	11.3%
Maclay	Scotland	28.6%
Tolly Cobbold	Ipswich	10.0%

Whitbread

Boddington	Manchester	20.0%
Devenish	Weymouth	25.0%
Marston	Burton	33.0%
Ruddle	Rutland	31.0%
Border	Wrexham	17.0%
Brakspear	Henley	27.0%
Morland	Abingdon	38.0%

Whitbread are also believed to have further interests of up to ten per cent in

Matt. Brown	Blackburn
Mitchell	Lancaster
Hartley	Ulverston
Buckley	Llanelli
Hook Norton	Banbury

Bass-Charrington and Whitbread have become two of the largest brewery companies in the country. They have done this by taking over many local breweries and then closing them down. During the 60's Whitbread alone closed fifteen local breweries. The local breweries above represent over 20% of remaining independents under the threat of possible takeover.

Member pressed

STOCKPORT WOMENS' Lib Group recently met Andrew Bennett, MP for Stockport North, to explain their criticisms of the Govmt's White Paper on proposed legislation to outlaw sex discrimination. Mr Bennett was sympathetic to most of the criticisms raised by the group & promised to ask a series of important questions in the House of Commons on issues brought up at the meeting. These were:

Employment

Mr Bennett agreed that it was hypocritical of the Govmt to rationalise the continued existence of single sex schools on the grounds of freedom of parental choice. He pointed out the financial difficulties involving change in this area, but agreed to press for a firm Govmt commitment to the phasing out of such schools by a definite date.

Education

a) Why was it that places employing fewer than 10 people would not be covered by the Bill?
b) Why are certain occupations (eg the armed forces & the clergy) to be excluded? On the clergy, Mr Bennett took the pragmatic view that the Govmt & women couldn't afford to antagonise the powerful catholic lobby, Nor was he prepared to ask why opportunities in the armed forces were not to be extended equally to women. He personally didn't want any extension of 'the number of people who are under economic & social pressures to join the armed forces'.

This reasoning didn't convince the meeting & raised the issue of 'protection' of women from certain undesirable occupations (like coal mining, where the Mines Act prohibits underground work for women). Members of the group were afraid that if 'protection' continued, women would be wide open to the criticism that they wanted all the benefits of equality whilst not being prepared to accept the less desirable, traditionally male, jobs. The MP agreed to ask a question about 'protection', & also to ask for a more precise definition of "where the employment of a woman (or a man) would be unsuitable on grounds of propriety & privacy", since as it stands, this clause is wide open to abuse. Mr.Bennett also agreed to ask the Minister for a more precise definition of "genuinely private social clubs", which are also excluded from the proposed Bill.

Enforcement

The group expressed their doubts about enforcing the Act through the County Courts & suggested instead, a separate & comprehensive system of 'Equal Opportunities Tribunals'. Mr Bennett didn't agree.

Discussion shifted to Social Security & Taxation & here Bennett agreed that radical changes were necessary to make equality for women a reality. He feared however, that reforms would not come in the near future because there was no mention of these areas in the Queen's speech.

Finally Mr Bennett agreed to inform the group of the various replies to his Questions in the House, & to fix up another meeting with the group when the Bill actually appears.
Perhaps other groups concerned with equality for women should arrange similar meetings with their MPs.

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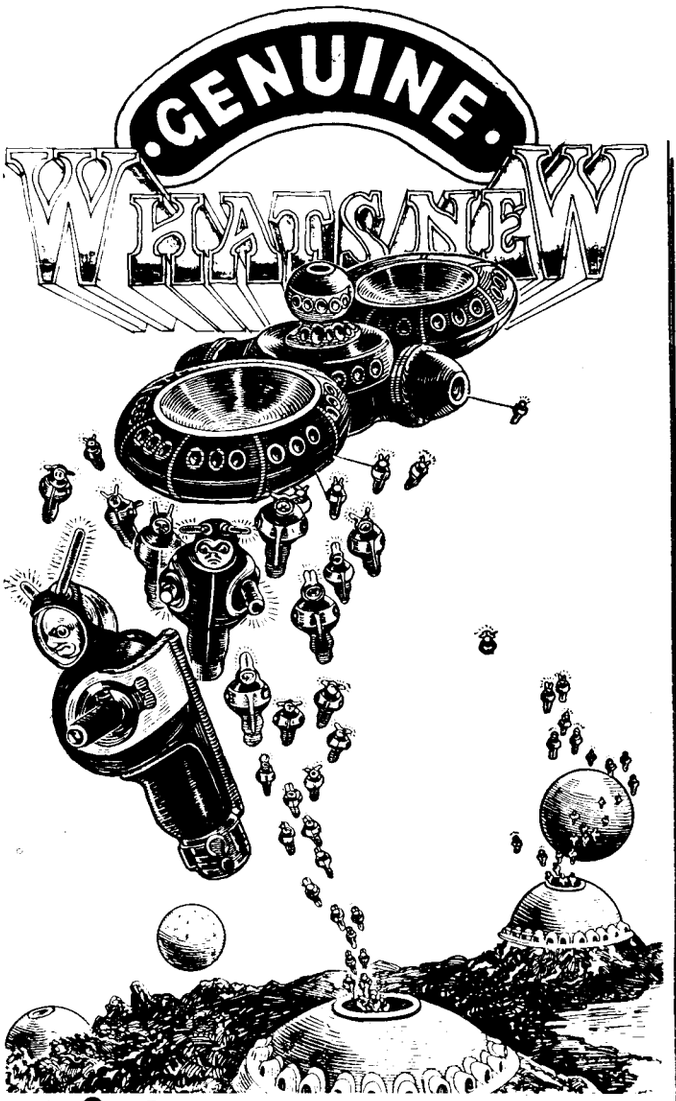


High society

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE by Edith Wharton. Penguin. 55p.

Very little known in this country, Edith Wharton was a gifted novelist, a friend of Henry James, and a woman from high society who during World War I was awarded the French Legion of Honour for her work with refugees and unemployed women. This novel is one of her masterpieces & deals with the emotional complexities & problems of allegiance generated when a young American is torn between his simple fiancee & a more sophisticated European countess.

ROY JOHNSON

A laugh a brother

GROUCHO, HARPO, CHICO & SOMETIMES ZEPPO, by Joe Adamsom. Coronet, £1.10.

A bumper volume packed with pictures of the Marx brothers & anecdotes about their lives & work. The text is liberally sprinkled with hysterical extracts of dialogue from their films. Extremely entertaining to read

Human meat

THE JUNGLE by Upton Sinclair. Penguin.65p.

Welcome reissue of American classic. Sinclair's realistic description of corruption & the inhuman working conditions in Chicago meat stockyards caused an uproar when it was published in 1906 and actually led to changes in the U.S. food laws within 6 months. He nails his socialist commitment to the mast on page 1 and keeps it there through 400 pages of harrowing action.

Grotesque fantasy

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SCIENCE FICTION ILLUSTRATION by Anthony Frewin. Jupiter £3.95.

A very attractive volume although a little slim at the price. It includes science fiction pictures from 1840-1940. The work of 2 early French artists is given a thorough & fascinating coverage. Grandville with his grotesque beasts & Robidon whose visions of chemical & biological warfare provide a chilling social comment.

A venture into the mechanical fantasies of the Victorians is followed by the real meat - the classic era of the science fiction mags from 1926 onwards. The wide range of illustrations covers the colourful, ingenious & the rather peculiar. Altogether an intriguing insight into the visions of science fiction.

HARRY BAUMGARTL

Hole fixation

BLACK HOLES - THE END OF THE UNIVERSE? by John Taylor. Fontana/Collins, 50p.

The amount of attention & speculation surrounding black holes in space is a fine example of how theoretical advances in pure & hard science can glide in to what seems to be more of a mystical fixation.The publishers have evidently cottoned on to this with their categorisation of the book under 'science & occult'. The author's got all the straight credentials though. So if you want to get into black holes, try going through the pages of this book.

HARRY BAUMGARTL

Economic roots

THE ECONOMICS OF IMPERIALISM by Michael Barratt-Brown. Penguin. £1.25.

Rather expensive but extremely useful contribution to the study of imperialism at its economic root. Barratt-Brown examines the classical, Keynesian & Marxist theories, then studies their relevance to the export of capital, the concept of the large firm operating transnationally, the nature of neocolonialism, and the general accumulation of capital itself. He, himself, subscribes to the thesis of Rosa Luxemburg that imperialism is a process of assimilation & transformation of economies into the sphere of competitive capital accumulation.

ROY JOHNSON

Penguin world

THE PENGUIN WORLD ATLAS . Penguin. £1.50

At long last Penguin add to their'Reference'series with a reasonably handy atlas - though in format it falls between pocket book & table size. All the usual information on physical geography, populations, climate, food production & the ocean floor but watch out for foreign cities being listed in their native language - like Praha, Wein & Moskva. Colour schemes rather unimaginative but only one serious complaint - too many maps spread across the page, with major cities disappearing into the spine.

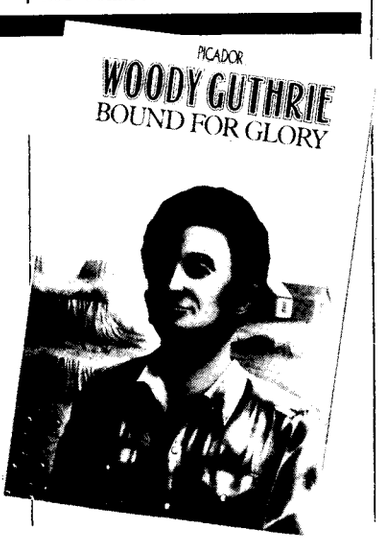
ROY JOHNSON

Guthrie's guts

BOUND FOR GLORY by Woody Guthrie. Picador, 75p.

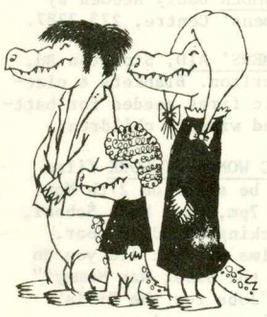
One of the first publications in the Picador non-fiction series is Woody Guthrie's classic autobiography. Written in 1943, it gives a unique insight into the social environment from which Guthrie sprung. His songs, commitment to the oppressed & his tragic hospitalisation for 15 years are now a legend. Bound for Glory goes back to the less publicised roots.

HARRY BAUMGARTL

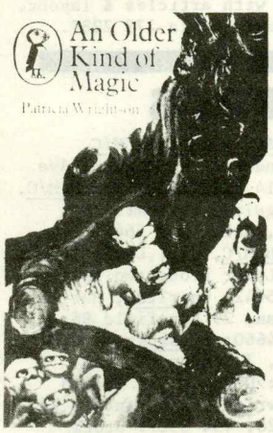


Bumper kiddies bundle

Armada Picture Lions is an enjoyable series for young children. The books are colourful, simple & exciting.
FREDERICK by Leo Lionni, 30p. Tale of a family of field mice & Frederick, who, instead of helping to collect the winter stores, supplies the family with food for thought about the colours, words & sun which he'd been collecting.



ALLIGATORS ALL ROUND by Maurice Sendak, 30p.
An alligator alphabet so instead of the traditional A is for apple approach, A is for alligators all around & B is for bursting balloons. Pleasant alligator illustrations to match.



AN OLDER KIND OF MAGIC by Patricia Wrightson. Puffin 25p.

This is one of the best books brought out recently. It's a tale about Australian children who fight, with the help of some Nyols (old people who used to live on earth), the profiteering of Sir Mortimer Wyvern. He wants to turn the botanical gardens into a car park. He tells the Minister that what people think, depends on what they are told. The advertising man explains very clearly what the creation of a market for consumption means. Marvellous mixture of fantasy & clearly explained reality. Definately worth reading.

ODD & THE GREAT BEAR by J. Roose-Evans. Carousel 30p.

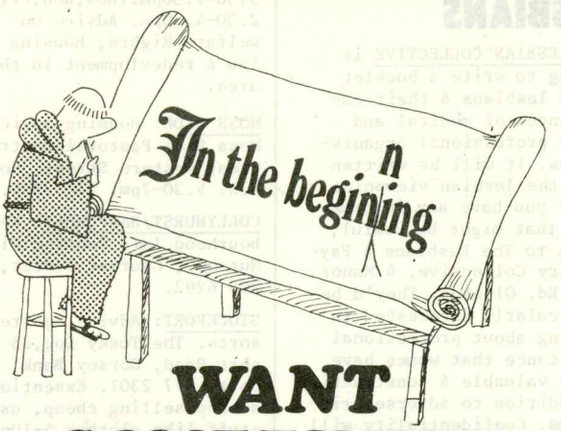
Pooh bear has left behind him a remarkable legacy of teddy bears & their adventures. Odd is one of them. In this story he sets off to find the Legendary Great Bear of King Arthurs Court, to discover who he is and, incidentally, the treasure supposedly hidden with the Great Bear. Exciting & full of adventure, villains and kind people.

EYE-WITNESS, ed. by Alan C. Jenkins. Armada Lions, 35p.
Collection of first hand accounts which range from the Battle of Britain to the Titanic Disaster. Good way of learning history.

Most fairy tales & legends contain sexist stories about the beautiful princess (or peasant girl) & handsome prince (or equivalent), & they deal with marriage, the acquisition of wealth (by fair means or foul), or punishment for greed. There's a fair selection of collected tales out at the moment.
SPIN STRAW TO GOLD by Barbara Sleigh. Armada Lions 30p.
This collection is from many different countries such as Wales, Japan, Ghana & England. Good collection if you like fairy stories.
OLD PETER'S RUSSIAN TALES by Arthur Ransome. Puffin 35p.
Collection incl. many old favourites like "Golden Fish", & some which are not so well known. First published 1916 & the stories therefore very pre revolutionary.

STORIES TO TELL by Elizabeth Clark. Brockhampton Press. £1.25.
First published in the '20s & '30s, these stories contain the tradition of magic & fantasy associated with older stories.

SUSAN KIRSOW



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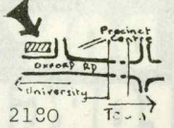

Norman Christon

LESBIANS

THE LESBIAN COLLECTIVE is trying to write a booklet about lesbians & their experiences of medical and other professional organisations. It will be written from the lesbian viewpoint so if you have any information that might be useful, write to The Lesbians & Psychiatry Collective, 4 Manor Park Rd, Glossop. They'd be particularly interested in hearing about professional assistance that women have found valuable & constructive in addition to adverse criticisms. Confidentiality will be respected.

THE LESBIAN COLLECTIVE meets at 8pm every Tuesday at the Women's Liberation Centre, 218 Upper Brook St,M/C 13. Phone Glossop 4142 for more information.

CHE

CHE (Campaign for Homosexual Equality) have a number of groups in the Manchester area. Altrincham, 10 Springfield Rd, 928 8756: Manchester,24 Lapwing Lane, Didsbury, 445 2889: Oldham, Derek 624 3869:CHE Youth Group, Side Door, 7 Birch Hall Lane, Longsight, Gord or Terry 225 9779. CHE Gay Womens Group-Sue or Liz 881 3683. BOLTON & WIGAN: new groups forming. For info contact Bob Crossman 928 8756 or write CHE, 28 Kennedy St, M/C.

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GINGERBREAD

GINGERBREAD meets on 1st Mon & 3rd Tues each month, 8pm at M/C Univ.Student Union

ADVICE

BRADFORD: Rylance St.Area Action Group (especially clearance advice):223 0181.

CHEETHAM HILL: Haliwell Lane Advice Centre, 100 Haliwell Lane: Mon & Thurs. 5.30-7.30pm:Tues,Wed,Fri. 2.30-4.30pm. Advice on welfare Rights, housing law & redevlopment in the area.

MOSS SIDE: Housing advice. Moss Side Pastoral Centre, Great Western Street. Mon & Wed. 5.30-7pm. 226 3886.

COLLYHURST/HARPURHEY: Neighbourhood Info Centre. Old Day Nursery, Churnet Street,M/C. 205 6292.

STOCKPORT: Advice Centre, of sorts. The Tusky Dog,25 Stockport Road, Gorsey Bank, Stockport. 477 2301. Essentially a shop selling cheap, useful stuff like clothes 5-10p.Also runs cheap transport & furniture service.

SALFORD: Rights stall in market: Sat. Also Community House run by Docks Action Group. Contact Billy Gill, 8 Broadway, Salford 5.

Also: Underdog, 83 Camp St, Salford 7. Tues,Thurs,Fri. 12-4pm. Gives advice on SS benefits, supplementary etc.

PARTINGTON: People's Rights Office. Daily. 775 6130.

CAMRA

CAMRA The Campaign for Real Ale meets Wed 20 Nov 8.00 Lord Nelson Stoneclough, Ringley near Radcliffe - contact Bill Calvert 764 2198. And Thur 21 Nov 8.00 The Gateway Wilmslow Road Parrs Wood, contact David Hall Macclesfield 21933

MENTAL PATIENTS

MANCHESTER MENTAL PATIENTS' Union now meets regularly at 178 Oxford Road, M/C 2. Every Saturday at 3pm.

Further info from M/C MPU c/o Estelle Beninson, 2 York Place
York Avenue, Prestwich.

NORMEDIA

NORMEDIA has started its 3rd series of contemporary music events in M/c. Next do will be on 2nd Decembe this will be the UK premiere of Christian Wolff's new work "Exercises". The composer will be taking part in the event. Royal Northern College of Music 8pm.

ADS AND INFO

LEGAL

RUSHOLME Legal Advice Centre St James Parish Hall, Danes Road, Rusholme. Tuesdays 6.30-9.30pm.

UNIVERSITY Legal Advice Centre 178 Waterloo Place (Oxford Road) Manchester 13. Tel. 273 4575. Mon-Fri 1-3pm. Tues & Thurs 5.30-7.30pm.

NELLO JAMES CENTRE, 136 Withington Road, Manchester 16. Tel 226 4164. Evening legal advice.

HELP

TAKE DEVELOPMENT LAND into Public Ownership. Anyone interested in helping to organise national campaign on this issue ring Chris 733 8813 or contact BRAG A45 Du Cane Crt,Balham High Rd SW17.

NCCL

DISCUSSION meeting on the future role of the NCCL will be held on 28th Nov at 7.30pm in M/C University Students Union,Oxford Rd. Anyone wanting to submit a paper for discussion, send a copy to Rhys Vaughan for circulation before the meeting. 44 Demesne Rd, M/C 16. Tel 226 7992.

TRANSPORT

MEETING on "Urban Transport & Energy Resources" addressed by Dr. D.Maltby in Dept of Architecture & Planning at 7.30pm on 2nd December.

WOMEN

OPEN DAY, organised by the M/C Womens' Groups, is being held on 30th Nov, from 10-4pm at Holy Name School Boundary Lane, Hulme, to show the range of activities & interests within the movement.

HELP is needed to organise a Nat.Conference due to be held in M/C 5/6th April. Contact North M/C group, 363 Lower Broughton Rd.

PLUMBER badly needed by Womens' Centre, 273 2287.

WOMENS' AID, Stockton Rd, Chorlton. Blankets & electric fires needed for battered wives & children.

BBC WOMEN AT WORK films to be shown on 27th Nov at 7pm, Peel Moat School, Buckingham Rd, H.Moor. Films = "What did you do in the Great War Mummy?" & "Jobs for the Girls". All women welcome.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS GROUP & Women's Aid Group both c/o Women's Liberation Centre. 218 Upper Brook St, Manchester 13.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION INFORMATION Service. Mon.-Thurs. 7.30-9p.m 218 Upper Brook St,M/C.273 2287

M/C WOMEN'S NEWSPAPER needs help with articles & layout. Contact Luchia 273 2287.

CONTACTS

CONTACTS: Central M/C, L.Conder, 6 Kensington Ave M/C 14, 248 7688: South M/C, M.Baguley, 51 Bamfield Cres, Sale. 962 5642: North M/C, Jill,Leslie, 364 Lower Broughton Rd, 792 5642: Chorlton, Mary Duncan, 29 Rensfield Rd, 888 4660: Didsbury, Judy Hunt, 7 Gaddum Rd, 445 4669: Didsbury 2, Judith Wainwright, 22 Grenfell Rd, M/C 20, 434 3327: Stockport 1, Ruth Hetherington, 30 Elms Rd, H.Moor 442 9679: Stockport 2, Teresa Grant, 7 Norman Rd,H.Moor 432 3752.

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